Planning
Beyond 2000

7

You have accomplished, at least to some degree, two of your three goals and are well on your way to being prepared for the year 2000. You have taken inventory of your technology items to determine the risk posed to you by the Year 2000 Problem and you are in the process of lowering your risk by replacing systems, communicating with vendors, and tracking vendor response to your certification requests.

But even in the unlikely event that all of your technology items have been certified, you are not prepared for the year 2000 unless you have a Year 2000 Contingency Plan in place.

It is important to implement a Year 2000 Contingency plan to prepare yourself and your organization for the hazards you may encounter as you approach the year 2000. As you go through the process of obtaining certification of technology items, keep in mind:

- A vendor may fail to meet your response deadline.

- A vendor may fail to certify a technology item.

- A vendor may fail to test an item to your satisfaction.

You should investigate options for replacing your technology items, even if you're planning on obtaining certification.

Chapter Seven   _____

It is also important to look ahead, not only *to* the year 2000, but *beyond.*

- After all the preparation you've done, you still could experience some degree of failure when the year 2000 arrives.

Don't be caught off guard by these potential problems. In developing your Year 2000 Contingency Plan, you must:

- Identify the technology items that must be replaced if certification is not possible.

- Identify possible replacement systems, their cost, and time needed to convert.

- Identify any foreseeable failures that could occur, even if only remotely possible.

- Identify which failures could harm your reputation, inhibit customer service, create financial liability, cause loss of revenue, and generate unwanted publicity.

- Monitor possible failures throughout the risk period.

- Have a documented plan in place to manage each possible failure.

- Plan and document operational backups to minimize the impact of any possible failure, including alternatives such as manual processes that could temporarily replace a computerized process that might fail.

- Whenever possible, test each of your *certified* technology items in a controlled environment, with your own configuration, to verify for yourself that the items will work in your organization when the year 2000 arrives. Unfortunately, this will not always be possible. But without testing, you still have no guarantee that a technology item will work properly in the year 2000.

If you begin planning now, you'll be ready to take action in the unlikely event that problems and failures occur. Once your Year 2000 Contingency Plan is in place, you can feel confident that you have done all you can to prepare your organization for the millennium and the technological problems that come with it.